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POSSIBLE ADDITION OF THE PRAIRIE SKINK TO THE DIET OF THE
COMMON GRACKLE

On 8 June 1984, at the intersection of California Street and the Union Pacific RR tracks, just west of Saddle Creek Road in Omaha, a Common Grackle (*Quiscalus quiscula*) was seen flying approximately 2 m above the observer, with a large adult prairie skink, (*Eumeces septentrionalis*) (Reptilia; Sauria) in its bill. The Grackle had difficulty flying, since the skink was somewhat heavy and struggling violently. The Grackle dropped to the ground about 7 m away and released the lizard. The skink lay on its back, twitching slightly. The distal half of its tail was missing. The lack of male breeding colors and presence of a relatively stout abdomen during this season indicated that it was a gravid female. When I approached to within 3 m of the Grackle it immediately grabbed the skink and flew away. This observation occurred at 1315. It is not known if the lizard was eventually ingested.

Since this observation was concurrent with a study that was being conducted on *E. septentrionalis*, and it is the only lizard that occurs in the described area, there was no doubt as to its identity. Blackmore (1940) reported finding prairie skink scales in the pellets of the Barred Owl (*Strix varia*). Peterson (1950) reported an *E. septentrionalis* pinned to a mesquite tree in Texas and implicated the Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*) as a possible predator. In addition, Beckenridge (1943) found the Loggerhead Shrike, American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*) and Northern Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*) to include the prairie skink in their diets. The above observation may justify the inclusion of *E. septentrionalis* in the food habits of the Common Grackle.

Literature Cited

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